

Media, PA – In 1944 John H. Simon, 78 of Collegeville, was in the Army Air Corps and being transported to the far east to prepare for the invasion of Japan. Enroute the ship he was aboard, USS Callan, honored a long-standing maritime tradition of 'crossing the line' wherein those embarked on a vessel that is crossing the equator are transformed from 'pollywogs' into 'shellbacks'. Mr. Simon and the rest of his Army colleagues were so honored and presented cards to confirm that fact. Unfortunately, Mr. Simon's wallet, card included, was lost before the war ended. —

His daughter, Harriet Thurstlic of Morton, heard her father often comment how much he missed that card as a memento of his time in the service and the great distances he had travelled as a young man. Ms. Thurstlic decided to contact Congressman Sestak's office to see if anything could be done to replace her father's card. Ms. Susan Heppler of the Congressman's staff then went to work researching the history of the USS Callan, Mr. Simon's service record and the process for replacing lost 'shellback' certificates.

As a result on 22 December, almost exactly 63 years to the day that he returned home from WWII, Mr. Simon received a replacement 'shellback' card and certificate in front of nearly twenty family members and friends. Following the presentation, Mr. Simon recounted his feelings when he learned the war against Japan had been won and he would not be invading the Japanese mainland. Thereafter Mr. Simon and three generations left Congressman Sestak's office for a family meal in celebration of their Dad, Grandad and Veteran. "My office has handled well over 9,000 constituent cases since January, 2007. I have been blessed with a staff who appreciate my responsibilities as both a Congressman and Representative and genuinely care for the people of this district. Today's ceremony reflects the professionalism and decency of our newest staff member Ms. Sue Heppler" said Sestak. "We cannot solve every problem or satisfy every request, but we work hard to do our very best. Sue had many other cases to work, so she added a few minutes to her day for a few weeks to make the time to help Mr. Simon and his family. That is the true spirit of public service and I am proud of my office's record of constituent services." concluded Sestak.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security*

*Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.*

###